

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of welding a tubular member having a thin portion in its circumference and having a circumferential outer edge to ~~[[a]]~~ another member over the entire circumference of said tubular member, characterized in that welding is started at a point ~~angularly spaced from said thin portion such that welding energy applied to said tubular member at said point will cancel welding energy which is applied to said thin portion and which tends to deform said thin portion and thus said tubular member~~ of said circumferential outer edge that is angularly spaced from said thin portion.

2. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said tubular member has an annular cross-section, wherein a first solidifying force produced by welding a ring-shaped cross-section, wherein the welding energy applied to said thin portion of said tubular member tends to deform said tubular member into an oval shape having a minor axis that passes said thin portion; a second solidifying force produced by welding, ~~and the welding energy applied to said point of said tubular member tends to deform said tubular member into an oval shape having a minor axis that passes said point; the deformation tendencies produced respectively by said first and second solidifying forces substantially canceling each other; said said second solidifying force being produced when~~

welding is started at said point and carried out over the entire circumference of said tubular member.

3. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein said point is angularly spaced from said thin portion by about 90 degrees.

4. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein said tubular member has two thin portions which have the same thickness and wherein welding is started at a point angularly spaced about 90 degrees from the midpoint between said two thin portions.

5. (Withdrawn) An assembly comprising said tubular member and said member that are welded together by the welding method as claimed in claim 1.

6. (Withdrawn) A method of welding a casing of a gear pump comprising an inner rotor, an outer rotor, a casing covering a radially outer periphery of said outer rotor, and side cylinders covering both sides of said inner and outer rotors, wherein said outer casing is welded to the circumferential edges of said side cylinders by the welding method as claimed in claim 1.

7. (Withdrawn) A gear pump assembly wherein said casing is welded to said side cylinders by the welding method as claimed in claim 6, and said casing is formed with a thin portion which is a cutout for receiving a slide seal pressed against said outer rotor.

8. (Withdrawn) An assembly comprising said tubular member and said member that are welded together by the welding method as claimed in claim 2.

9. (Withdrawn) An assembly comprising said tubular member and said member that are welded together by the welding method as claimed in claim 3.

10. (Withdrawn) An assembly comprising said tubular member and said member that are welded together by the welding method as claimed in claim 4.

11. (Withdrawn) A method of welding a casing of a gear pump comprising an inner rotor, an outer rotor, a casing covering a radially outer periphery of said outer rotor, and side cylinders covering both sides of said inner and outer rotors, wherein said outer casing is welded to the circumferential edges of said side cylinders by the welding method as claimed in claim 2.

12. (Withdrawn) A method of welding a casing of a gear pump comprising an inner rotor, an outer rotor, a casing covering a radially outer periphery of said outer rotor, and side cylinders covering both sides of said inner and outer rotors, wherein said outer casing is welded to the circumferential edges of said side cylinders by the welding method as claimed in claim 3.

13. (Withdrawn) A method of welding a casing of a gear pump comprising an inner rotor, an outer rotor, a casing covering a radially outer periphery of said

outer rotor, and side cylinders covering both sides of said inner and outer rotors, wherein said outer casing is welded to the circumferential edges of said side cylinders by the welding method as claimed in claim 4.